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This testimony is in opposition to S.B. No. 325 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH MANDATORY EVACUATION ORDERS.

I find several troubling issues with this and similar legislation.

I am involved with various groups that have Memorandum of Understanding's with the State of CT, American Red Cross, local municipalities, Salvation Army and many other Volunteer Groups Active in Disasters (VOAD).

I have yet to see similar legislation or mandates be enacted with success. Hurricane Katrina is a great example of what can happen when such orders are put in force. Mayor Nagin ordered a citywide mandatory evacuation at 9:30 am on August 28, the first such order in the city's history.

Many people refused to leave the city. Reasons were numerous, including a belief that their homes or the buildings in which they planned to stay offered sufficient protection, lack of financial resources or access to transportation, or a feeling of obligation to protect their property. These reasons were complicated by the fact that an evacuation the previous year for Hurricane Ivan had resulted in the illnesses of many elderly people since cars were stalled in traffic for six to ten hours. The fact that Katrina occurred at the end of the month, before pay checks were in the hands of many was also significant.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, looting, violence and other criminal activity became serious problems. With most of the attention of the authorities focused on rescue efforts, public security in New Orleans degraded quickly. By August 30, looting had spread throughout the city, often in broad daylight and in the presence of police officers. Such looting became a huge issue at major medical centers as well. While staff was focused on patient care and transportation, looting was going on IN PLAIN SIGHT.

If you look at the geography of this state, take Katrina as an example, it is easy to see the various problems that can happen. CT's more rural areas are populated with citizens that prepare considerably different than our urban areas. Because many of these residents are further away from many urban conveniences including access to grocery stores, home improvement centers, community centers, etc. – they are exponentially more prepared.

Though the idea may seem a good idea given our urban areas, how would we handle many of these factors:

- Means of evacuation – what if someone doesn't have their own method of evacuation. How will they be punished? How do we define "reasonable" in their ability to comply (not listed in this bill).
- Cost of evacuation – what if citizens have a vehicle, but don't have large amounts of fuel on hand to comply with the evacuation? What about lack of available fuel for purchase?
- Traffic flow – How would we handle 40-50 times the traffic? On a normal day, it can take more than a half hour to 45 minutes to get through any of our major arteries (Hartford, Waterbury and New Haven are great examples) and that is with no traffic accidents. How do we multiply that with more accidents during an evacuation, vehicles stalled because they ran out of fuel while waiting in evacuation traffic and the increase in traffic flow on our city streets creating more barriers.
- Overall fear – history has shown that the elderly and disabled have an even greater disadvantage. They may generally have the means but fear historic problems with evacuation orders.

- Theft and violence – With lack of law enforcement, how will homes, businesses and government offices be secured from theft, wanton destruction of property and overall violence as was seen during Katrina?

I only use Hurricane Katrina as an example because it is still fresh on our minds. Throughout our nation's history we've had similar issues whenever such orders have been enforced.

What about individual responsibility?

Last winter, I went without power for ten days. I was without power for over a week during last October's storm. I was prepared with plenty of potable drinking water, extra food and fuel for heat. I didn't have to depend on government orders to flee. I prepared myself in advance and survived just fine. I was also able to assist my elderly neighbor and make sure our properties were safe and secure.

How will this legislation affect firearm owners? We have nearly 174,000 citizens who are licensed to carry a firearm (not including those that own long arms as used for hunting or self defense purposes). What do they do with the firearms they legally own? Leave them behind and they can end up in a criminals hands if their house or place of business is broken into (**possible since many police departments alert neighbors during the pistol permit process that a citizen is applying for a permit**).

I see no exemption here to allow someone with a permit to be allowed to carry their firearm in a shelter if that shelter happens to be a school.

I ask you to reject S. B. 325 as it simply creates too many other problems and doesn't seem to have any historical necessity to begin with.